

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1: (Original) In a segmented mold having a plurality of tread segments vertically slidably disposed in a frusto-conical bowl, a tear resistant shield secured to the center portion of the outer surface of each tread segment to prevent bonding of such tread segments to the inner surface of the bowl wherein the shields are formed of a non-metallic material having a lower coefficient of friction than the material of the bowl.

Claim 2: (Original) The combination of Claim 1, wherein the non-metallic material is a high temperature resistant polyester based aramid fiber reinforced laminate.

Claim 3: (Original) The combination of Claim 1, wherein the tear resistant shields each take the form of an elongated plate which is removably slidably secured within a complementary vertically extending cavity formed in the outer surface of each tread segment, such cavity having an open end to receive a shield.

Claim 4: (Original) The combination of Claim 2, wherein the tear resistant shields each take the form of an elongated plate which is removably slidably secured within a complementary vertically extending cavity formed in the outer surface of each tread segment, such cavity having an open end to receive a shield.

Claim 5: (Currently Amended) The combination of Claim 3, wherein the edges of each plate ~~is~~ are beveled to fit within complementary bevells formed in the side and bottom edges of each cavity.

Claim 6: (Original) The combination of Claim 5, wherein the non-metallic material is a high temperature resistant polyester based aramid fiber reinforced laminate.

Claim 7: (Currently Amended) The combination of Claim 4, wherein the edges of each plate ~~is~~ are beveled to fit within complementary bevels formed in the side and bottom edges of each cavity.

Claim 8: (Cancelled)

Claim 9: (Currently Amended) A segmented mold ~~that includes~~ comprising:
a frusto-conical bowl;
a plurality of tread segments vertically slidably disposed in the bowl;
spring means interposed between each tread segment and the bowl to move the tread segments into a partially exposed position relative to the bowl;
a tear resistant shield secured to the center portion of the outer surface of each tread segment to prevent bonding of such tread segments to the inner surface of the bowl wherein the shields are formed of a non-metallic material having a lower coefficient of friction than the material of the bowl;
each tear resistant shield including an elongated plate which is removably slidably secured within a complementary vertically extending cavity formed in the inner surface of the respective elongated plates, such cavity having an open end to receive a shield; and
wherein the spring means move the tread segments into a partially exposed position relative to the lower bowl so the ~~tread segments~~ elongated plates can be slid vertically out of their respective cavities.

Claim 10: (Original) The combination of Claim 9, wherein the non-metallic material is a high temperature resistant polyester based aramid fiber reinforced laminate.